

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

H

3

HOUSE BILL 814
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/27/15
Senate Health Care Committee Substitute Adopted 6/30/15

Short Title: The William C. Lindley, Jr. SUDEP Law.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 15, 2015

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT REQUIRING THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER TO ESTABLISH A MEDICAL
3 EXAMINER TRAINING PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES TRAINING REGARDING
4 SUDDEN UNEXPECTED DEATH IN EPILEPSY DURING MEDICOLEGAL DEATH
5 INVESTIGATIONS.

6 Whereas, sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP) is a mysterious, rare
7 condition in which typically young or middle-aged individuals with epilepsy die without a clear
8 cause and is generally defined by the medical community as a sudden, unexpected,
9 nontraumatic, nondrowning death in an otherwise healthy individual with epilepsy, where the
10 postmortem examination does not reveal an anatomic or toxicologic cause of the death; and

11 Whereas, SUDEP is believed to account for up to 17 percent of deaths in individuals
12 with epilepsy; and

13 Whereas, autopsy plays a key role in determining the diagnosis of SUDEP, yet the
14 Institute of Medicine has found that SUDEP may be underreported for several reasons,
15 including, but not limited to, a lack of awareness about SUDEP among medical examiners; and

16 Whereas, the cause of SUDEP is not known, and opportunities for its prevention
17 have been hindered by the lack of a systematic effort to collect information about individuals
18 who have died from SUDEP, as is done with many other disorders; and

19 Whereas, it is appropriate to raise awareness of SUDEP among medical examiners
20 by developing a SUDEP awareness program and by facilitating research into the causes and
21 prevention of SUDEP; Now, therefore,
22 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

23 SECTION 1. G.S. 130A-382 reads as rewritten:

24 "§ 130A-382. County medical examiners; appointment; term of office;
25 ~~vacancies.~~vacancies; training requirements; revocation for cause.

26 (a) The Chief Medical Examiner shall appoint ~~one~~two or more county medical
27 examiners for each county for a three-year term. In appointing medical examiners for each
28 county, the Chief Medical Examiner shall give preference to physicians licensed to practice
29 medicine in this State but may also appoint licensed physician assistants, nurse practitioners,
30 nurses, ~~coroners~~, or emergency medical technician paramedics. A medical examiner may serve
31 more than one county. The Chief Medical Examiner may take jurisdiction in any case or
32 appoint another medical examiner to do so.

33 (b) County medical examiners shall complete continuing education training as directed
34 by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and based upon established and published
35 guidelines for conducting death investigations. The continuing education training shall include



1 training regarding sudden unexplained death in epilepsy. The Office of the Chief Medical
2 Examiner shall annually update and publish these guidelines on its Internet Web site. Newly
3 appointed county medical examiners shall complete mandatory orientation training as directed
4 by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner within 90 days of their appointment.

5 (c) The Chief Medical Examiner may revoke a county medical examiner's appointment
6 for failure to adequately perform the duties of the office after providing the county medical
7 examiner with written notice of the basis for the revocation and an opportunity to respond."

8 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2016.